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CIA data: spy chief here fired on choice of targets

By Bob Olmstead

Newly released CIA memos indicate that the head of the Chicago police spy unit was fired in 1967 because he was more interested in fighting organized crime than groups his superiors considered subversive.

Capt. William J. Duffy was demoted to district watch commander two months after CIA agents and one of Duffy's superiors discussed him as a "problem."

The inside look at dealings between the CIA and Chicago police was revealed Sunday in Central Intelligence Agency documents obtained by the Alliance to End Repression under a court order. The Alliance is suing the Chicago Police Department, the CIA and others for spying on lawful political activity in Chicago.

THE DOCUMENTS state that two CIA agents met with Duffy, then-Supt. James B. Conlisk Jr. and Deputy-Supt. John F. Mulchrone to offer the CIA's help in improving the police department's intelligence work.

At the Dec. 11, 1967, meeting a memo states, the CIA experts recommended "the automation of special files on subversive groups and on organized crime. . . . These files are too sensitive to be incorporated in the CPD General Name Index which is, in effect, open to the public."

Intelligence Director Duffy was supposed to follow up with a visit to CIA headquarters. But the CIA noted problems with Duffy, who was a pioneer in developing police methods of spying on organized crime gangsters.

"Another problem that the team noted is an uncertainty about the mission of the Intelligence Division," a CIA memo said.

"DIRECTOR DUFFY, by background and inclination, feels that his division should be concentrating on long-range intelligence operations against organized crime. However, for the past two years, his assets have been pressed into service to gather tactical intelligence on civil disturbances."

The documents state that the two agents who came to Chicago were personally briefed before their trip by Richard H. Helms, then the CIA director. One of the agents (their names were deleted from the reports) said Helms told them he wanted to help improve local police spy units because of the lessons from racial riots in Newark and Detroit earlier in 1967.

"As a concerned citizen, Mr. Helms felt that the experience and techniques that the CIA has developed in foreign intelligence operations should be made available to law enforcement agencies in this country."

In Chicago, Richard Gutman, attorney for the Alliance to End Repression, called the CIA's involvement with Chicago police illegal and a spur to Chicago Red Squad abuses.

Congress' mandate creating the CIA, he said, gave it no police powers or internal security functions, and "thus implicitly restricts the CIA to the field of foreign intelligence."

BECAUSE THE CIA "helped streamline the Chicago Red Squad," Gutman said, "the CIA is partially responsible for the many Red Squad abuses since 1967."

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